

Sabancı University  
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences  
**CULT 501: Core Works in Cultural Studies**  
**Spring 2022**

Thursdays 1:40 - 4:30 p.m. FASS 1102  
Zoom link: <https://sabanciuniv.zoom.us/j/93974632201>

**Instructor:** Ateş Altınordu (FASS 2083, ext. 9283, [atesaltinordu@sabanciuniv.edu](mailto:atesaltinordu@sabanciuniv.edu); meeting by appointment)

**Course description:** This course is designed to broaden and deepen students' knowledge of cultural theories and their empirical applications through a discussion of key works in cultural sociology. Readings will focus on the relationship of culture to social class, violent conflict, populism, social movements, mass media, consumption, and collective memory.

**Requirements:** Students are expected to complete the assigned readings before class and actively participate in class discussions. The course requirements include an in-class presentation (~25 minutes) and a final exam (14-16 pages to be completed outside of class, due June 17). The presentation should briefly summarize the most important points from the readings and conclude with two critical questions for discussion. We will discuss final exam topics on Week 10 (May 12).

**Evaluation:** The course grade will be composed of class participation (20%), the presentation (20%), and the final exam (60%). Late submission of final exams is allowed up to five days after the deadline and will be subject to a 3-point (out of 100) reduction for each day late.

Letter grades will be calculated according to the following scale:

93-100	A	83-86	B -	73-76	C	60-66	D
90-92	A-	80-82	B	70-72	C-	0-59	F
87-89	B+	77-79	C+	67-69	D+		

**Attendance Policy:** Students who miss more than four class meetings without official excuses will receive N/A as their course grade. Only (1) a report from the University Health Center or (2) a permission note from the university administration for participation at a university event *for the date of the class in question* count as official excuses. Those who enter class more than 20 minutes after its start will be considered absent on that date. *Please do not ask for exceptions.*

**Academic integrity:** Cases of plagiarism, cheating, and fraud will result in an F for the course grade and will be referred to the relevant Faculty Dean for potential disciplinary action. For Sabancı University's Academic Integrity Statement, see

<https://www.sabanciuniv.edu/en/academic-integrity-statement> (ENG) or <https://www.sabanciuniv.edu/tr/akademik-durustluk> (TR).

**Readings:** All reading are available as pdf files on the course page at SuCourse.

### **Week 1 | Introduction | March 3**

- Wendy Griswold. 1992. "Recent Developments in the Sociology of Culture: Four Good Arguments (And One Bad One)." *Acta Sociologica*: 323-328.
- Sewell, Jr., William H. 2005. "The Concept(s) of Culture." Pp. 152-174 in *Logics of History: Social Theory and Social Transformation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

### **Week 2 | Foundations | March 10**

- Geertz, Clifford. 1973. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books. Pp. 3-30, 87-125. ("Thick Description: Toward An Interpretive Theory of Culture" / "Religion as a Cultural System").
- Sahlins, Marshall. 1976. *Culture and Practical Reason*. The University of Chicago Press. Pp. 166-204. ("La Pensée Bourgeoise: Western Society as Culture.")

### **Week 3 | Codes & Narratives | March 17**

- Alexander, Jeffrey C. 2003. *The Meanings of Social Life: A Cultural Sociology*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press. Pp. 3-26. ("Introduction" / "The Strong Program in Cultural Sociology: Elements of a Structural Hermeneutics")
- Smith, Philip. 2015. *Why War: The Cultural Logic of Iraq, The Gulf War, and Suez*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. Pp. 3-34, 154-204. ("Why War? Theorizing the Role of Culture and Civil Discourse" / "The War in Iraq of 2003.")

### **Week 4 | Performances | March 24**

- Alexander, Jeffrey C. 2004. "Cultural Pragmatics: Social Performance between Ritual and Strategy." *Sociological Theory* 22 (4): 527-573.
- Karakaya, Yağmur. 2020. "The Conquest of Hearts: The Central Role of Ottoman Nostalgia within Contemporary Turkish Populism." *American Journal of Cultural Sociology* 8(2): 125-157.

### **Week 5 | Events | March 31**

- Sewell Jr, William H. 1996. "Historical Events as Transformations of Structures: Inventing Revolution at the Bastille." *Theory and Society* 25(6): 841-881.
- Altınordu, Ateş. 2017. "A Midsummer Night's Coup: Performance and Power in Turkey's July 15 Coup Attempt." *Qualitative Sociology* 40(2): 139-164.

### **Week 6 | Emotions | April 7**

- Hochschild, Arlie Russell. 1979. "Emotion Work, Feeling Rules, and Social Structure." *American Journal of Sociology* 85(3): 551-75.
- Aslan, Senem. 2021. "Public Tears: Populism and the Politics of Emotion in AKP'S Turkey." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 53(1): 1-17.

### **Week 7 | Culture in Action | April 14**

- Swidler, Ann. 1986. "Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies." *American Sociological Review* 51(2): 273-286.
- Swidler, Ann. 2003. *Talk of Love: How Culture Matters*. The University of Chicago Press. Pp. 111-134. ("Love and Marriage").
- Vaisey, Stephen. 2009. "Motivation and Justification: A Dual-process Model of Culture in Action." *American Journal of Sociology* 114(6): 1675-1715.

### **Week 8 | Class, Taste, Consumption | April 21**

- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1984. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Pp. 1-96.
- Peterson, Richard A. and Roger M. Kern. 1996. "Changing Highbrow Taste: From Snob to Omnivore." *American Sociological Review* 61(5): 900-907.
- Sherman, Rachel. 2018. "'A Very Expensive Ordinary Life': Consumption, Symbolic Boundaries and Moral Legitimacy Among New York Elites." *Socio-Economic Review* 16(2): 411-433.

### **Week 9 | Media and Popular Culture | April 28**

- Jacobs, Ronald N. 1996. "Producing the News, Producing the Crisis: Narrativity, Television and News Work." *Media, Culture & Society* 18(3): 373-397.
- Polletta, Francesca and Jessica Callahan. 2017. "Deep Stories, Nostalgia Narratives and Fake News: Storytelling in the Trump Era." *American Journal of Cultural Sociology* 4(3): 392-408.
- Hintz, Lisel. 2021. "The Empire's Opposition Strikes Back: Popular Culture as Creative Resistance Tool under Turkey's AKP." *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 48(1): 24-43.

**\* Spring Break | May 2-8 \***

## **Week 10 | Presentation of Paper Topics | May 12**

**\* National Holiday | May 19 \***

## **Week 11 | Sports & Culture | May 26**

- Nuhurat, Yağmur. 2018. "Contesting Love Through Commodification: Soccer Fans, Affect, and Social Class in Turkey." *American Ethnologist* 45(3): 392-404.
- Erhart, Itr. 2017. "Do Women Get the Offside Rule? Female Fans, Labelling and Stereotypes in Turkey." Pp. 189-203 in *Race, Gender and Sport: The Politics of Ethnic 'Other' Girls and Women*. Edited by Aarti Ratna and Samaya Farooq Samie. Routledge.

## **Week 12 | Valuation & Evaluation | June 2**

- DiMaggio, Paul. 1987. "Classification in Art." *American Sociological Review* 52(4): 440-455.
- Lamont, Michele. 2009. *How Professors Think: Inside the Curious World of Academic Judgment*. Harvard University Press. Pp. 1-21, 53-106. ("Opening the Black Box of Peer Review" / "On Disciplinary Cultures").
- Rivera, Lauren. 2012. "Hiring as Cultural Matching: The Case of Elite Professional Service Firms," *American Sociological Review* 77(6): 999-1022.

## **Week 13 | Social Movements | June 9**

- Benford, Robert D. and David A. Snow. 2000. "Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment." *Annual Review of Sociology* 26: 611-639.
- Armstrong, Elizabeth A. and Suzanna M. Crage. 2006. "Movements and Memory: The Making of the Stonewall Myth." *American Sociological Review* 71(5): 724-51.

**\*\* Final Exam Due | June 17 (Friday) \*\***